

Most herbs can be preserved by drying them. To dry herbs, tie loosely in small bunches and hang upside down in an airy, dust-free room, or spread the herbs loosely on a screen or cheese cloth. Be sure the room is cool. Do not apply heat or let sunlight hit the drying plants or some flavor will be lost. When leaves have dried enough to become brittle, crush the leaves and flowers and place them in tightly cover glass jars. Store the jars in a dark location to keep the leaves from fading. Label each jar with the name of the herb and the date of drying.

Sprigs of most herbs can also be frozen. Chives are usually chopped before freezing. Cooking causes chives to lose their flavor.

Little wonder that herbs have earned a place in American gardens. Freshly harvested herbs have pungent and aromatic qualities that far exceed those of their commercially obtained counterparts—whether fresh or dried. Even after the outdoor growing season is over, you can still enjoy dried herbs in aromatic potpourris and sachets. You can continue to grow herbs indoors in pots on sunny window sills. Growing herbs is FUN! They require little care and space, have few insect and disease problems, and require only moderate fertility levels. Above all, herbs provide you with a continuing and satisfying hobby.



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Green Tips

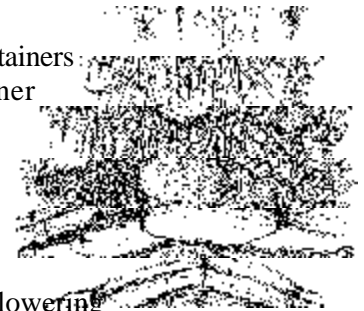
Plant and Grow Guides

Herbs (GT 107)

Herbs are truly a cook's "Secret Weapon." They give foods a better flavor, dress up the simplest dishes, and can be used to decorate the home indoors and out. They require little space and can be easily grown in an apartment-sized plot, among flowers, as part of a vegetable garden or in pots and containers in a window. Herbs are needed only in small amounts to flavor foods. Three to four plants of most herbs provide a year's seasoning for the average family.

Herbs do well in the same conditions that you provide for your flower or vegetable garden. Although most herbs will grow in partial shade, they do best with at least 6 hours of sunlight a day. Most herbs grow well under a wide range of soil conditions, with the exception of extremely wet, poorly drained soils. You can bypass the problems of poor drainage by the use of raised beds. To improve soil fertility and texture, add several bushels of compost per 100 square feet of soil before planting. Since herbs do better in soils of low to medium fertility, additional fertilizer applications are not needed. Prepare your garden site in the same manner that you would a vegetable garden, spading it to a depth of 6 to 12 inches. Then level and rake the site to remove only large clods and debris.

Many herbs can be grown successfully in containers on a patio, balcony or terrace. Container growing is especially recommended for herbs that need good drainage and tend to rot in overly wet garden soils, or for tender herbs that need to be overwintered indoors. Containers are easily transported and can be arranged attractively with containers of flowering plants.



CHOOSING A CONTAINER - Any container is suitable for growing herbs as long as it has a drainage hole. Clay pots are preferred because they are more porous than plastic. Other containers that work well include window boxes, strawberry jars, and hanging baskets.

SOIL MIX - The soil you use should be loose and well-drained. You can make a good mix for container grown plants by mixing equal parts of potting soil, peat moss, and perlite (or vermiculite).

CHOOSING THE PLANTS - Small and slow-growing herbs look best in containers. Some examples are variegated sage, purple sage, golden sage, parsley, Greek oregano, rosemary, prostrate rosemary, marjoram, bush basil, thyme, chives, and summer savory. Window boxes, strawberry jars, and large pots can accommodate a combination of several herbs and flowers.

CARE OF HERBS IN CONTAINERS - Watering is the most difficult part of container gardening. Plants growing in containers dry out faster than in the ground. When the top of the soil feels dry, apply enough water

to allow a small amount to come out the container's drainage holes. Since most herbs do not require high fertility, you should not need to fertilize them. During the growing season, pinch the plants back to keep them bushy and compact and remove any dead or diseased leaves.

GROWING HERB INDOORS - Herbs growing in containers can be easily moved indoors for the winter. Allow the plants to become acclimatized in early fall by moving them indoors a few hours a day over a period of several days. After the move, be sure to provide sufficient light to keep the plants from getting spindly. Grow them in the sunniest location you have or under fluorescent lights. Indoor plants need less water than they did outdoors, so water them only when the soil is dry. Overwatering will cause the roots to rot. Check the plants frequently for aphids, spider mites, and whiteflies which are common pests on indoor herbs.

SUMMER - Your herb garden will need attention throughout the growing season. Weed control and provision for adequate moisture are two important cultural necessities. When rainfall is less than 1 inch per week, provide additional moisture. The use of a mulch is an attractive and effective means of controlling weeds and maintaining constant soil moisture and

temperature for the root systems of your herbs. Mulches that you might consider include shredded bark, compost, ground corncobs, pecan hulls, or dried grass clippings. To be effective, the mulch should be applied at least 3 inches deep around the plants.

WINTER PROTECTION - Most perennial herbs are hardy plants that are able to survive winter. However, Michigan winters can be severe. Try these simple steps to ensure plant survival:
 -Start out with healthy plants and maintain vigor throughout the season.

-Avoid late fertilizing and pruning. Pruning should be done during spring and summer; avoid excessively cutting the plants back in the fall.

-Finally, plants that are marginally hardy (such as rosemary and oregano) should be dug up, potted, and overwintered indoors. They can be moved back to the garden the following spring.

HELP HARVEST CUES

Herb	Height	How to Harvest	Use
Wormwood	30"	Cut leaves when plant starts to flower	Tea in water, used in soups
Basil, Sweet	30-35"	cut 2" above growing	Tea in soups, stews, water, water
Coumber	30"	cut stems when seeds are dry	Crushed seeds in soups, pickles, preserves
Dill	30-35"	pick when stems, leaves are green	Herbs in pickles, eggs, seeds in soups
Garlic, Sweet	30"	Cut leaves when plant starts to flower	Tea, seeds in soups, preserves, etc
Summer Savory	18"	Harvest 2 weeks before when plant flowers	Tea in soups or dried in water, soups
Chives	15-20"	cut 2 weeks before dry	Tea in water, seeds in preserves, soups
Basil	2"	cut 2 weeks before dry in water	Tea, in water or dried in water, soups
Cilantro	15"	cut leaves 2 weeks before dry	Tea in soups, water
Catnip	30"	Harvest plants when leaves are dry	Tea in water, stews, water
Fennel	30"	Harvest when seeds are when in full bloom	Herbs in full bloom for medicinal purposes
Garlic Basil	30"	cut stems	Tea in soups, water, tea, preserves
Oregano	30"	use leaves when dry	Tea in soups, stews, water, water
Red Basil	18"	Cut leaves when plant starts to flower	Tea in soups, or dried in water, ice cream
Rosemary	30"	cut leaves just before flowering	Tea and stems in soups, water, soups
Sage	18"	cut 2 weeks before dry	Tea in water, tea, preserves, etc
Thyme	18"	Cut leaves when plant starts to flower	Tea for medicinal, used in soups, pickles
Wild Onion	15"	use leaves when dry	Tea in water, soups, preserves
Wild Garlic	30"	Harvest leaves and stems	Tea in soups or dried in water, water
Wild Mint	8-15"	cut 2 weeks before when dry	Tea in water, soups, preserves